

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Preserving Our Agricultural Heritage

Connecting Our Past...With Our Future

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agsservices

Montgomery County's agricultural reserve is an important environmental resource for future farm enterprises. A strong agricultural heritage provides a diverse business community and a strong economic base. Combining these strengths with the commitment for farmland preservation makes Montgomery County an attractive place to live and work.

Agricultural activities occupy about one-third of Montgomery County's land area. Over half of the 93,000-acre agriculture reserve is preserved through transfer of development rights or easement purchase initiatives. The County's diverse agricultural industry – 577 farms and 350 horticultural enterprises – produce millions of dollars in economic contribution from farm products and operations. The majority of Montgomery County farms are family-run operations, many reaching back several generations, which employ more than 10,000 residents. The County has 577 farmers, of which 50 percent of them work full time in farming.

Horticulture

During the past 25 years, the Horticultural Sector has grown dramatically. The 350 horticultural businesses employ more than 7,000 of the people working in agriculture. Horticulture is one of the largest sectors in agriculture and includes nurseries and landscaping companies, arborists, sod farms and lawn care firms, and green house businesses.

Twenty percent of the horticultural industry in Maryland is in the County and Montgomery County ranks second in the State in total number of horticultural firms.

Equine Industry

Horses have become a major component of the agricultural industry numbering over 12,000 horses. Horses represent a tremendous opportunity for farmers in terms of the supplies, services and products needed to support the horse population which exceeds the population of cows. The growing hay industry in Montgomery County is directly proportional to the growing number of horses. High quality veterinarians that provide services to horses are now available for other livestock operations in the County.

Agriculture for the Future

Montgomery County is committed to sustaining a viable agricultural industry. The Agriculture Reserve established in 1981 by the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space Functional Master Plan, provides 93,000 acres for farming. A variety of private organizations assist farmers to prosper in Montgomery County: Farm Bureau, Farm Tour Committee, Agricultural Promotion and Marketing Council, Agricultural Advisory Committee, Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board and Montgomery County Farmers Markets Association work together with the Cooperative Extension Service, Soil Conservation District, Department of Economic Development, and Farm Service Agency.

Farmland Preservation

Acres Protected

Montgomery County Agricultural Easement Program (AEP)	6,799
Montgomery County Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)	48,584
Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)	2,086
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)	3,594
Rural Legacy Program (RLP)	3,935
	<hr/>
	64,998

Economic Contribution to County's Economy

Over 179 County farms have annual sales of \$10,000 or more. The average farm size is 130 acres and 40 percent of the farms are greater than 50 acres in size.

Traditional Agriculture	\$ 41,634,000
Horticultural Industry	\$125,330,000
Equine Industry	<u>\$ 84,855,896</u>
Total	\$251,819,896

Montgomery County Statistics

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agservices

Total Land in Montgomery County	316,800 acres
Agriculturally Assessed Lands	79,863 acres
Land in Farms	75,077 acres
Percent of Land in Farms	24.0 %
Number of Farms	577 farms
Number of Horticultural Business	350
Average Farm Size	130 acres
Average Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold Per Farm	\$72,156 dollars
Total Cropland	53,209 acres
Harvested Crop Land	44,161 acres
Pasture Land	12,536 acres
Woodland-(Public 31,513 and Private 57,487)	89,000 acres
Average Age of Operator	57.4 years
Percentage of Principal Occupation Farmers	50.0 %
Publicly Owned Lands (Federal, State, County, WSSC)	58,500 acres

Farms by Type of Enterprise

Crop or Livestock	Number of Farms		Amount Produced
Beef	104		2,201 Cows
Horse	783		12,000 Horses
Dairy	7		1,546 Cows
Sheep	47		952 Sheep
Corn for Grain	48	1.04 Million Bushels	11,121 Acres
Corn for Silage	14	20,805 Tons	1,304 Acres
Wheat	34	313,107 Bushels	4,717 Acres
Soybeans	43	403,042 Bushels	13,794 Acres
Hay	192	26,145 Tons	11,524 Acres
Fruits, Vegetables and Flowers	33		3,000 Acres
Christmas Trees	18		
Production Nurseries and Greenhouses	175		900 Acres
Sod	26		4,500 Acres
Landscape, Arborist, Lawn Care	150 businesses		

Statistics provided by Ag Census 1997/2002 United States, Department of Agriculture, USDA-NASS, University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service.

*Prepared by: Montgomery County Department of Economic Development
Agricultural Services Division 301-590-2823*

May 2006